News Release

April 21, 1995

CRTC ANNOUNCES A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO RADIO

OTTAWA/HULL – The CRTC today announced measures and proposals that will implement a more streamlined approach to its regulation of commercial radio stations. Among other things, the Commission has introduced more flexibility with regard to the formats for FM stations and called for comments on proposals concerning simulcasting, multiple ownership and the Canadian talent development process (Public Notices CRTC 1995-60 and 1995-61).

"Given the financial hardship experienced by the radio industry in recent years, the Commission has worked with various segments of the broadcasting and music industries to create a more flexible, streamlined regulatory framework for radio," said CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer. "To this end, we've reduced the level of regulation to that absolutely necessary to ensure the diversity and quality of radio programming and to guarantee exposure for Canadian music and Canadian talent."

"The measures and proposals announced today should give radio stations more flexibility to satisfy the diverse tastes of their audiences while still making an effective contribution to the careers of new Canadian artists," Mr. Spicer stated.

"The Commission, however, remains strongly committed to the elements that form the cornerstone of our regulatory structure for radio: i.e. the minimum levels of Canadian content that radio licensees must broadcast; the French vocal music requirements for French-language stations; and the radio market policy for considering new licence applications."

Changes to current requirements and procedures

Due to the increasing popularity of country music, the Commission considers that it is no longer necessary to maintain separate regulated formats for Pop, Rock and Dance stations and Country stations. FM licensees, after obtaining appropriate amendments to their Promise of Performance, will generally be allowed to move freely from one format to the other, as is currently the case for AM stations. A separate `Specialty' format will be retained for FM stations not oriented to mainstream popular or country music in order to promote the diversity of programming available to listeners.

The Commission soon will also propose another amendment to its regulations that would provide FM licensees with more flexibility to change their level of instrumental musical selections, provided they broadcast the associated level of Canadian popular music.

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The current guidelines on the provision of local programming and on the broadcasting of hit musical selections by English-language FM stations remain unchanged.

Call for public comments

In today's public notice 1995-61, the Commission called for comments on a more streamlined approach to Canadian talent development. Currently each station submits detailed initiatives to support new Canadian musicians and other performers, which imposes a heavy administrative workload on the licensee and on the Commission. The CRTC proposes that, at the time of licence renewal, all private commercial radio stations commit yearly financial contributions to organizations concerned with the development of Canadian talent such as the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Record (FACTOR) and MusicAction in a manner that will ensure that such organizations continue to receive annual funding of at least 1.8 million dollars from radio stations. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters is being asked to develop a proposal concerning how such a system would be administered and the level of contribution that would be expected from individual stations.

The Commission also called for comments on a proposal to amend its regulations governing simulcasting by commonly-owned AM and FM stations in the same market (Public Notice CRTC 1995-60). Currently simulcasting is generally limited to 42 hours per week, between midnight and 6 a.m. The Commission invites comments on the advisability of allowing an additional 42 hours per week of simulcasting and whether this should be free of any time restrictions.

To ensure true competition and the diversity of editorial voices, the Commission will generally continue to limit licensees to ownership of one AM and one FM station in the same language in any given market. In addition, the Commission proposes to require licensees who already own two stations in a market to obtain CRTC approval before acquiring any level of ownership position in a third station in that market.

Comments on the proposals set out in today's public notices must be received by the Secretary General, CRTC, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2 (fax: 819-994-0218) no later than June 20, 1995.

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Contact: CRTC Public Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N2
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